UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Monday, March 9, 2026

Straws in the Wind - Part 276

From the LA Times: *The University of Texas System's Board of Regents has unanimously approved a rule requiring its universities to ensure students can graduate without studying "unnecessary controversial subjects," despite warnings it could leave them less prepared for the real world. The rule also requires faculty to disclose in their syllabi the topics they plan to cover and adhere to the plan, and says that when courses include controversial issues, instructors must ensure a "broad and balanced approach" to the discussion.*

The policy... does not define what qualifies as "controversial" or what constitutes a "broad and balanced approach." Opponents warned that leaving those terms undefined would force administrators to interpret them case by case, pressuring professors to avoid difficult material rather than risk complaints.

...Board Chair Kevin Eltife said the lack of specificity came as the system tried to craft a policy that could work in today's politically charged environment. "We are in difficult times," he said. "Vagueness can be our friend." ...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2026-03-03/university-of-texas-regents-approve-limits-on-teaching-unnecessarily-controversial-subjects.

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From the Yale Daily News: *A newly established Committee on the Principles of Academic Freedom — comprising nine faculty members — will review the "historical, legal, and ethical foundations of academic freedom" over the coming months, a... statement on Yale provost's office website said. The office of University Provost Scott Strobel announced the new committee on its website without an email to the broader Yale community, saying that the committee will release a statement on "the principles that guide the academic freedom of Yale faculty" by the end of the 2026 calendar year, alongside a summary report.*

"Despite the phrase 'academic freedom' being invoked frequently, we have not as a community of faculty had a chance to dive deeply into how this phrase is understood and to what end," incoming committee chair Gregory Huber, a political science professor, wrote in [an] email to the News...

Full story at https://yaledailynews.com/articles/provost-forms-faculty-committee-to-write-academic-freedom-statement.

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- FAQs for Senate Faculty about Possible Strike by UAW; Winter 2026
- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
- Fight for the Future of Higher Ed Town Hall
- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix

Remaking the University

- Liner Note 49. University Voice Under a Necro-President - 3/9/2026
- An Invitation: Know Your Governing Board (Guest Project) - 3/4/2026
- Liner Note 48. The Faculty's Budget Fight at UCLA - 2/23/2026

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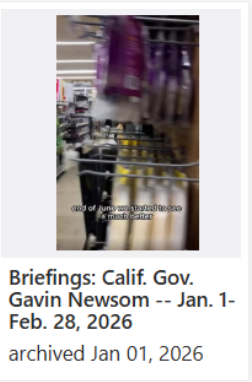
Topics

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, U of Texas, Yale

Now Two Months at a Time



Briefings: Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom -- Jan. 1-Feb. 28, 2026

archived Jan 01, 2026

As blog readers will know, we like to keep track of Gov. Newsom and have been collecting videos on his doings, and related matters, on a quarterly basis. But lately, his seeming campaign for president has become so intense - with soundbites from interviews, podcasts, etc. - that we have gone to a bimonthly basis.

You can find the January-February 2026 collection at:

https://archive.org/details/newsom-1-1-2026-new-year

And we are collecting March-April 2026 at:

https://archive.org/details/newsom-03-04-2026

Lots of statements, some controversial, some promotional, but not much about UC. He will occasionally say things such as California has the best public higher ed system. But it is what it is. We can expect the governor's gaze to continue to wander from California and UC to the national scene where he has to overcome the problem that he brings no electoral votes to the table. California will vote for the Democrat regardless of who the nominee is, barring some very unlikely circumstance.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, politics, UC

Sunday, March 8, 2026

The Budget: First, let's preserve. Then let's question - Part 2

As blog readers will know, UCLA's former CFO Steve Agostini was under pressure from the Academic Senate to produce usable data on the campus budget so that proposed budget cuts could be examined. He eventually produced a budget document, but shortly afterwards made comments about the budget as it had been previously managed and documented that led to his rapid termination.

The problem here is that removing the CFO does not remove underlying issues of budget management or accounting. As blog readers will also know, yours truly quickly downloaded available UCLA financial accounts that Agostini had criticized and preserved them so that they wouldn't vanish as quickly as he did.*

There are overlapping reports on UCLA expenses available from 1) UCLA for the period 2002-03 to 2022-23 (unaudited reports), 2) UC as part of its systemwide (audited) financial reports from 2015-16 to 2024-25,** and 3) the Agostini report for 2023-24 (only).***

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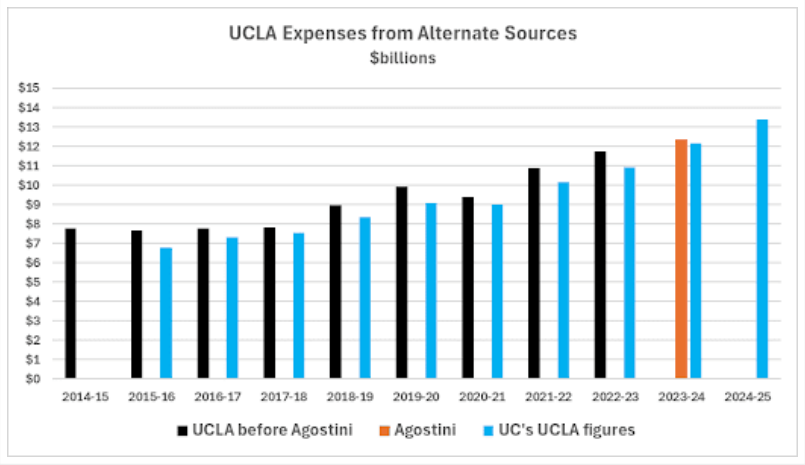

The chart above shows UCLA expenditures as reported from the three sources. The key takeaway is that the numbers do not agree. There could be all kinds of reasons for the discrepancies including alternative definitions of revenues and accounting methodology. Still, why there are differences is something for the Academic Senate and its relevant committees to be analyzing. If you don't have numbers that you understand, you can't address underlying budget issues.

When a new permanent CFO is selected, that person should be committed to presenting reports that make clear what UCLA's financial situation actually is.

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*You can find the downloaded documents, related items, and other budget documents at:

https://archive.org/details/ucla-budget-book-v-final-feb-2026.

**The UC documents do not break out revenues.

***The Agostini budget document had unit-level budget data for 2024-25, but did not provide a total for expenses.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 275

From Inside Higher Ed: *Two weeks after introducing a policy that allowed administrators to secretly record faculty members during class, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill chancellor Lee Roberts told faculty he would nix the rule. "The whole idea was to create clarity and reassurance," Roberts said during a Faculty Senate meeting Friday. "That policy clearly has not achieved that aim."*

Faculty members applauded at the news. During a Q&A, Roberts confirmed that no faculty members will be surreptitiously recorded until—and if—a new policy is put in place. Administrators will continue to evaluate whether the university needs such a policy, he said. In 2024, university officials opted not to renew economics instructor Larry Chavis's contract after

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secretly recording several of his classes. Since then, "I have not heard of a single [other] instance—not [even] just a case where we debated surreptitious recording. It just hasn't come up. So why go through this exercise that's creating so much disquiet when this seems to be an extraordinarily rare type of occurrence?" Roberts said at Friday's meeting...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/03/02/unc-chancellor-scraps-secret-recording-policy.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, U of North Carolina

Did You Spring Forward?

This is the time of year when folks in California complain that they thought they had voted on, and passed, a ballot proposition that would stop the clock-changing.

And there are debates about whether to stop the clock changing and, if so, whether to leave the clocks on daylight or standard time.

It's also the time of year when we provide everything (and more) about time and clock changing from a lecture presentation given in winter 2022 (when instructors still were wearing masks due to COVID).

Link at https://archive.org/details/mitchell-time-edited.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: miscellaneous, politics

Saturday, March 7, 2026

By the book at Davis

From Inside Higher Ed: *Bill Garrity [university librarian and vice provost of digital scholarship] still remembers the moment last fall when the University of California, Davis, library transformed into a performance hall. A quartet played beneath its high ceilings, the strains of a medieval-style guitar echoing among the stacks... Increasingly, UC Davis students are turning to Shields Library not just to study but to attend musical performances, meet with mental health ambassadors, cuddle with therapy dogs and engage in other activities. Campus leaders say it has become a "third place"—a term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg to describe a space beyond home and work where people gather, connect and belong.*

Amid broader discussions about the disappearance of third places—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic—the role of community as a public health necessity has gained renewed attention. College libraries nationwide have increasingly stepped into that void... At UC Davis, "the library is intellectually, organizationally and physically at the heart of campus," Garrity said. "It's a place where people spend a lot of time and absolutely serves the whole campus—all students, all faculty, all researchers, all disciplines." ...In addition to hosting programs, the library also deploys mental health ambassadors to engage students in conversation, promote stress-relieving activities and connect them with resources, Garrity said... The library also partnered

Maybe we worry too much about AI ???

I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 15

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

with the campus tutoring center to repurpose the lower-level reading room into a centralized tutoring hub...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/college-experience/2026/03/03/uc-davis-library-emerges-campus-third-place.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UC-Davis

Straws in the Wind - Part 274

From the Cornell Daily Sun: *Wendy Wolford, vice provost for international affairs, sent an email... informing the Cornell community about the University's immigration support and resources, following U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's arrest of a Columbia student from her dorm... The email provides four types of resources available to the community: preparation, immediate assistance, immigration support and emotional and academic support.*

In regards to preparation, Wolford provided a "Know Your Rights, Claim Your Rights" presentation and the University's immigration violations policy. "On or off campus, it is Cornell's policy that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are only allowed to enter a closed university space or private residence if they have a valid judicial warrant or if someone voluntarily allows them to enter," Wolford wrote.

In the case where immediate assistance is necessary, Wolford encouraged community members on the Ithaca campus to call the Cornell University Police Department at 607-255-1111. If immediate assistance is necessary at Cornell Tech, individuals are encouraged to call Cornell Tech Safety & Security at 646-971-3611. At Weill Cornell Medicine, individuals can call WCM Security at 212-746-0911.

The email statement was released a day after ICE agents arrested Columbia University graduate student Elmina Aghayeva, according to The Columbia Spectator. The agents gained access to Aghayeva's residential building after telling the building superintendent they were searching for a missing child, according to the New York Times. They did not provide a warrant when asked by a public security officer...

Full story at https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/03/university-emails-immigration-support-resources-following-ice-arrest-at-columbia.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Cornell, diversity, politics